



THE TEXAS WE CREATE

STATE OF TEXAS CHILDREN 2012
Texas KIDS COUNT Annual Data Book



CENTER *for* PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

WORKING FOR A BETTER TEXAS™



UNLESS SOMEONE
LIKE YOU CARES
A WHOLE AWFUL LOT,
NOTHING IS GOING
TO GET BETTER.
IT'S NOT.

- DR SEUSS

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Foundation



**METHODIST
HEALTHCARE
MINISTRIES**
OF SOUTH TEXAS, INC.

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Frances Deviney

Frances Deviney, Ph.D.

Texas KIDS COUNT Director
Center for Public Policy Priorities



My daughter Ava is 5 years old. She loves for me to tell her stories, and her favorites are the stories about her world, her friends, her school, and her home. And if I veer off course, she is quick to correct me and keep me true to the realities of her world. Fortunately, I don't think we ever really lose that sense of curiosity and drive to know more about our world as we grow up. It's just that

FROM THE TEXAS KIDS COUNT DIRECTOR

finding the details you need to tell your story can sometimes be difficult.

The center and the Texas KIDS COUNT Project are built around the idea of using data to tell the story of our community to bring about positive change. We seek to bring awareness to problems children face and highlight the policy solutions that can make kids' lives better and Texas stronger. We want to provide conversation starters for policymakers, families at the dinner table, and colleagues at the workplace. We hope you use the data in this report to start conversations of your own—conversations about our choices and their outcomes.

This year's report comes following some harsh choices about what we are willing to do for Texas kids. After a \$5.3 billion dollar cut to education, a 66 percent cut to the Family Planning Program, and cuts to child abuse prevention, Medicaid and CHIP provider rates, and children with special health care needs—to name a few—children were not our top priority. It's time we learn from our past choices, positive and negative, so that we can shape a different story for our future. If we keep kids as our number one priority, the story about how we turned things around to build a better Texas can be an inspiration for generations to come.

F. Scott McCown

F. Scott McCown

Executive Director
Center for Public Policy Priorities



I am a fifth-generation Texan on both sides of my family tree. Texas soil has nourished my family in many ways. Let me give you one example. On my mother's side, my grandfather was a small businessman in the Texas panhandle. Knowing that college was the way for his three children to

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

get ahead, he moved to Denton merely so he could afford to send his three children to North Texas State Teachers College. While my grandfather paid part of the cost of college, the state made it affordable. The dollars the state put into those three kids were a good investment. My mother became a public school teacher. One uncle became a Methodist Minister. One became an Air Force Pilot.

Today Texas isn't making the same sorts of investments in kids. Yet we know that ensuring opportunity for families is the only path to a working

democracy and a vibrant economy. We must invest in education—from early childhood education all the way through graduate and professional education, to ensure opportunity.

Our report addresses education and much more. We try to present a comprehensive look at child well-being in Texas. We hope it helps inform Texans about the consequences of our choices.

Dazzie McKelvy

Consultant
Workforce Matters

Board of Directors
Center for Public Policy Priorities



For those of us working to improve the lives of low- and moderate-income Texans, we know that we can't talk about the well-being of children without first talking about the responsibility of parents. I am passionate about the well-being of children because of my own experiences as a teen parent. We want

FROM A BOARD MEMBER

all parents to be able to provide themselves and their children with a self-sufficient, healthy, middle-class life. But the responsibility is ours to make certain all parents have the opportunity to provide this life for their children.

At the center, we believe that opportunity should not be an accident of circumstance or geography. We believe that we have to make public policy choices that allow opportunity to flourish everywhere and for everyone. As we say, we all do better when we all do better.

We know that the choices we make today will shape our state for years to come—the state in which our children will grow up. If we want a Texas that offers opportunity for all of us, we must come together to create that future now.

Each time we choose to create opportunities that make our state a better place for all of us, we make a difference in the lives of those who have the least among us and move ourselves one step closer to living in a better Texas.

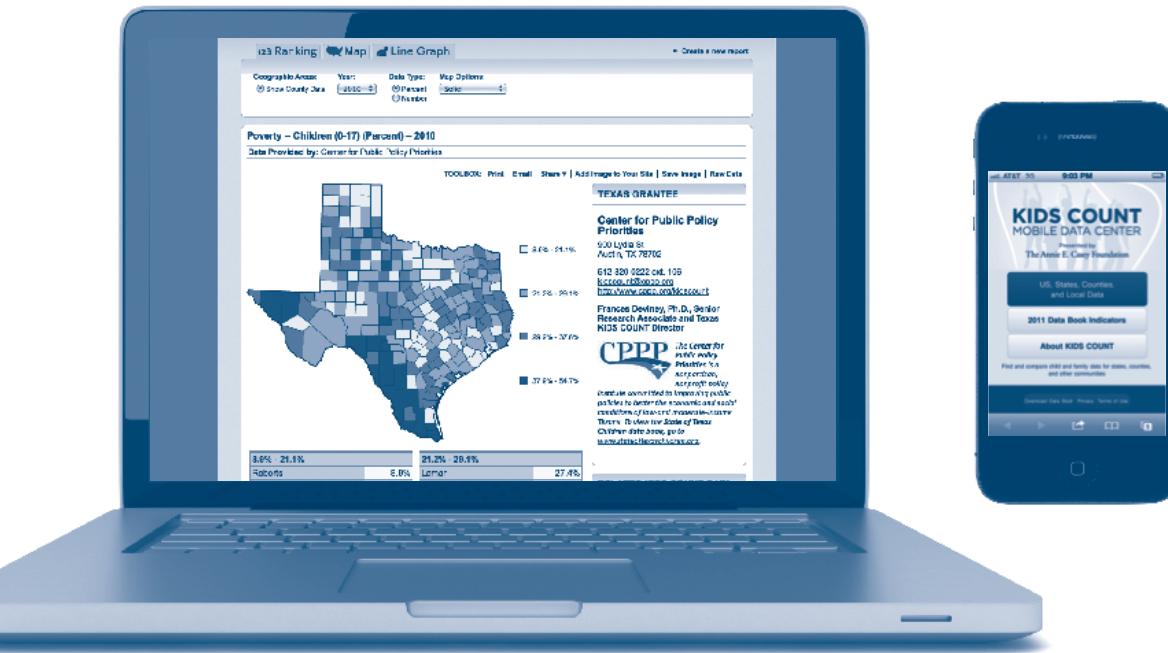
SMART CHOICES ARE BASED ON GOOD DATA

THE KIDS COUNT DATA CENTER IS AN INTERACTIVE TOOL TO FIND GOOD DATA FOR INFORMED CHOICES.

[HTTP://DATACENTER.KIDS COUNT.ORG](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)

All of the indicators the Texas KIDS COUNT project tracks, including those not published in this report, as well as data from the National KIDS COUNT project are housed on the Data Center. To reach Texas' state and county-level data, go to <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>. From there you can:

- **Rank** states, Texas counties, the 50 largest cities in the U.S., and Congressional Districts on key indicators of child wellbeing;
- Create a **customized data profile** for your county;
- Generate your own customized **maps and trend lines** that show how Texas children are faring and use them in presentations and publications;
- Feature maps and graphs **on your own website** or blog that are automatically updated when new data is uploaded; and
- View and share data quickly and easily anytime and anywhere with the **enhanced mobile site** for smart phones.



Visit <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/Help.aspx> to view an instructional video and answers to frequently asked questions about the Data Center.

HIGHLIGHTING BEXAR COUNTY

The Texas KIDS COUNT Project maintains over 50 indicators on the KIDS COUNT Data Center for the state and all 254 counties in Texas. This snapshot of Bexar County provides a glimpse of the data available on the Data Center.

INDICATORS	COUNTY TREND		COUNTY RANK
Total Child Population	2000 396,473	2010 465,286	 17%
Percent of Children in Poverty	2000 22.7%	2010 24.6%	 8%
Unemployment Rate	2000 3.5%	2011 7.9%	 126%
Percent of Children Enrolled in Medicaid	2000 19.6%	2010 33.4%	 70%
Percent of Children Receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps)	2000 10.9%	2010 29.4%	 170%
Percent of Births to Women Receiving Late or No Prenatal Care	2005 27.0%	2008 26.4%	 2%
Percent of All Births That Were to Teens Ages 13-19 (Out of All Live Births)	1998 16.8%	2008 14.1%	 16%
Public School Enrollment (for School Year)	2001-02 269,646	2010-11 330,259	 23%
Percent of 3 & 4-Year Olds Enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten	2000-01 17.7%	2010-11 30.8%	 74%
Attrition in Public High Schools	2001 42%	2011 35%	 17%
Confirmed Victims of Child Abuse (Rate per 1,000 Children)	2000 9.0	2011 13.5	 50%
Children in Foster Care (Rate per 1,000 Children)	2001 5.7	2011 7.9	 39%

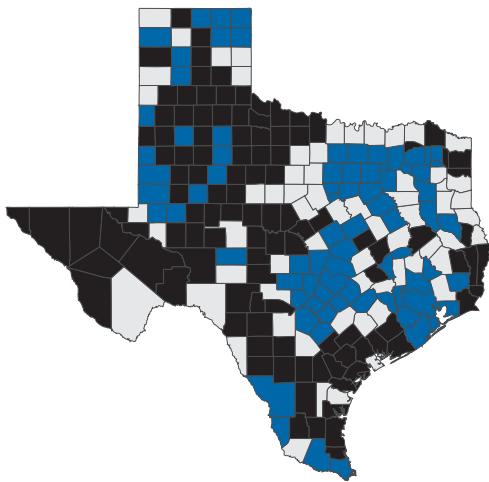
MORE KIDS, MORE DIVERSITY, MORE RESPONSIBILITY

**96%
OF TEXAS
KIDS ARE
CITIZENS¹**

MORE THAN HALF OF OUR COUNTIES – MOSTLY RURAL – HAVE FEWER KIDS NOW THAN IN 2000.⁴ TWO-THIRDS OF THE TEXAS GROWTH HAPPENED IN JUST EIGHT URBAN COUNTIES (BEXAR, COLLIN, DENTON, FORT BEND, HARRIS, HIDALGO, TARRANT, AND TRAVIS).⁵

POPULATION CHANGE (AGES 0 TO 17)

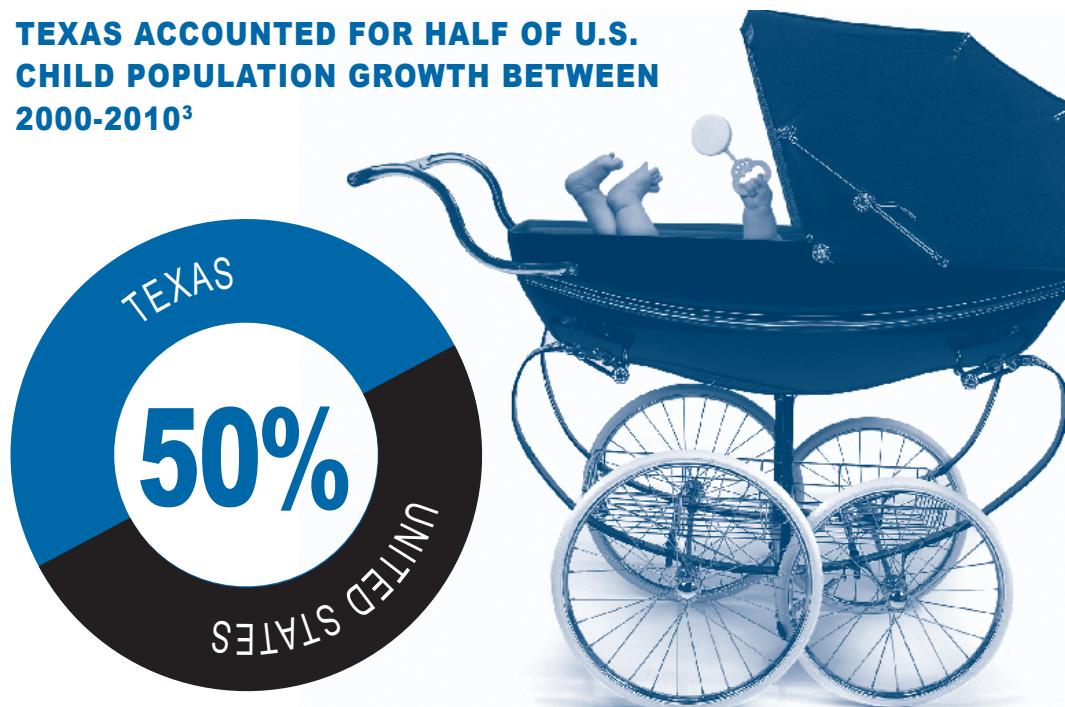
DECREASE	Lost between -25% to -5%
LITTLE CHANGE	-5% to 5%
INCREASE	5% to more than 25% gain



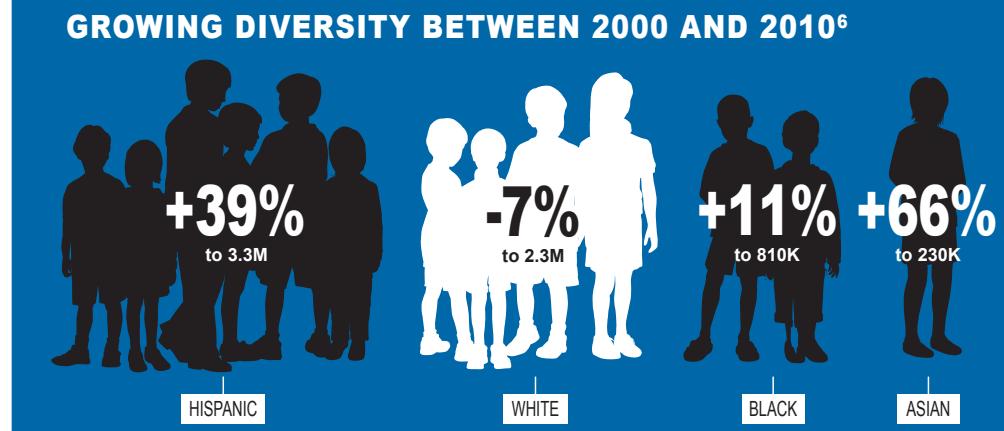
TEXAS ADDED 1M KIDS!

If children are the heart of every family, then Texas has a powerful and steady heartbeat. The number of kids in Texas grew by nearly one million (17 percent) in the last decade, reaching more than 6.86 million.² But as our numbers grow, so do our needs. Texas' growing child population will always be an asset, as long as we educate them and provide them opportunities to contribute to our economy. We need to implement policies that will enable our kids to grow into healthy, educated adults, which means anticipating growth and embracing the opportunities inherent in our diversity.

TEXAS ACCOUNTED FOR HALF OF U.S. CHILD POPULATION GROWTH BETWEEN 2000-2010³



GROWING DIVERSITY BETWEEN 2000 AND 2010⁶



ENTERING THE WORLD HEALTHY IS NO GUARANTEE

Texas' population is growing rapidly in large part because of our high birth rate. In 2008⁷, 405,242 babies were born in Texas—the 2nd highest birth rate in the country (behind only Utah).⁸

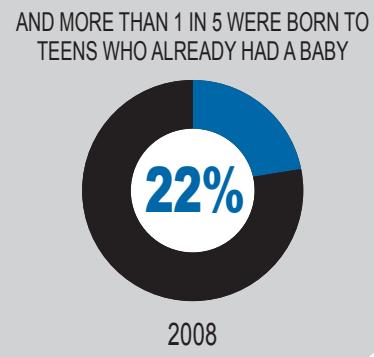
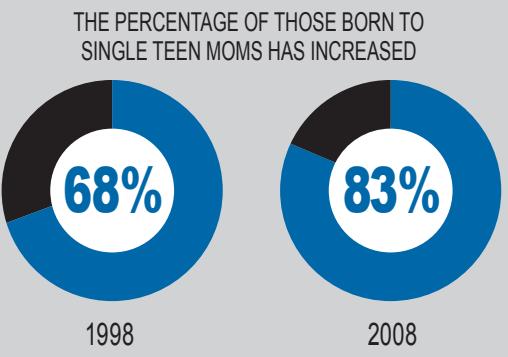
Early, consistent, quality prenatal care is paramount for the health of mom and baby. Babies born to women who receive prenatal care are less likely to be born too small or to die before their first birthday.⁹ The moms are also more likely to be in better health and to access pediatric care for their baby.¹⁰ For many women, prenatal care is their first entry into the health care system. An important step to improving maternal and infant outcomes is to connect women to the health care system throughout their lifetimes. That way, if and when they decide to have children, they will be healthier to begin with, and will be better prepared to access prenatal care.

AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE . . .

A new state rule excludes family planning clinics from our Medicaid Women's Health Program that have any affiliation with an abortion provider, even if financially and legally separate. This rule violates federal law. If enacted, Texas will lose the federal funds that pay 90 percent of the costs to serve around 130,000 Texans each month. This comes on top of a 66 percent funding cut (\$73 million) for the Department of State Health Services' Family Planning Program which already eliminated basic prevention and birth control for at least 150,000 women. The Legislative Budget Board estimates that these cuts alone will lead to over 20,000 additional low-income pregnancies, costing Texas Medicaid about \$100 million in 2012-13.¹¹⁻¹²

Texas' choices should prioritize fiscal and physical health. Ending 80 percent of Texas' family planning programs does neither.

ALTHOUGH BIRTHS TO TEENS HAVE DECLINED:¹⁵



STRUGGLING FROM THE START¹³

39%

OF BABIES WERE BORN TO MOTHERS WHO RECEIVED LATE OR NO PRENATAL CARE

1 OF EVERY 7

BABIES WERE BORN PRETERM

UP 13%

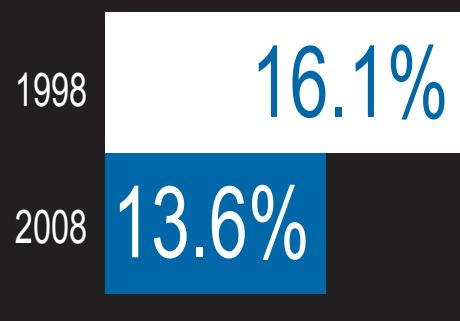
PERCENTAGE OF BABIES WEIGHING LESS THAN 5.5 POUNDS UP 13% SINCE 2000

2,478

BABIES DIED BEFORE THEIR FIRST BIRTHDAY

THE PERCENTAGE OF BIRTHS TO TEENS DECLINED BETWEEN 1998 AND 2008¹⁴

(BIRTHS TO TEENS 13-19 AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL LIVE BIRTHS)



THE TEXAS ECONOMY

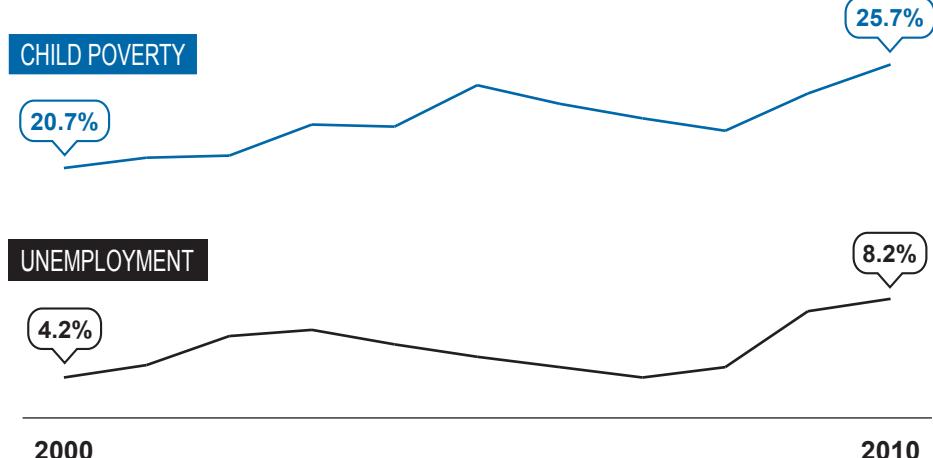
MORE LOW-PAYING JOBS
+
HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT
=
INCREASED POVERTY

MORE THAN HALF A MILLION TEXAS WORKERS EARN MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS, TYING MISSISSIPPI FOR THE WORST RATE (NEARLY 10%) OF LOW-WAGE HOURLY WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY¹⁹

In times of crisis, we rally around our family because they give us support and strength. Families know that when one member is not doing well, the whole family is affected. But that doesn't just hold for the traditional nuclear family. We've rallied around each other as a nation (9/11), and at the state (Hurricane Katrina) and local levels (2011 wildfires) in times of crisis. We came together—as a family—to help those in need get back on their feet because it was the right thing to do for them, and for the whole community.

For a community, poverty is as much a crisis as a one-time disaster. The effects are just as powerful and devastating. But unlike a one-time disaster, poverty is ongoing. It's also something we can change. We have made specific choices over the last several decades to fight poverty for our oldest residents. Our choices to secure their physical (Medicare) and financial (Social Security) health has cut poverty for people over 65 by more than half.¹⁶

CHILD POVERTY RISES AND FALLS WITH ADULT UNEMPLOYMENT²⁰



Opportunity matters: When Black and Hispanic Texans are twice as likely to leave school before getting a high school degree²¹ and 1.5 to 3 times more likely to be unemployed²² (i.e., lose their job through no fault of their own), it's no surprise that child poverty is higher too. We can do a better job of structuring our opportunity systems (e.g., dropout prevention, workforce training) to the needs of individual communities, because economic opportunity is the best antidote to child poverty.

TEXAS' BLACK & HISPANIC CHILDREN are **3X AS LIKELY** TO LIVE IN POVERTY as WHITE & ASIAN CHILDREN²³

MIC MODEL

But we haven't made as strong a commitment to reducing child poverty, even though children living in poverty are at a high risk for cognitive, emotional, educational, and health problems that last into adulthood.¹⁷ Today, more than one of every four Texas kids live in poverty, a 24 percent increase since 2000.¹⁸ Unfortunately, as the child poverty rate rose, we made choices that make it even harder for kids and families to get their financial footing by cutting those programs designed to support Texans in times of crisis.

When it comes to Texas' children, it's time to get back to basics. That means investing in the things that helped give us our start—like a strong public education, access to doctors before we get sick, and healthy food on the table. We can make the smart choices to protect the health and well-being of Texas kids and help families build economic security. It doesn't get any more basic than that.

NATIONAL CHILD POVERTY RATES

WHEN YOU COUNT WORK-SUPPORTS, MANY CHILDREN PROTECTED FROM POVERTY NATIONALLY

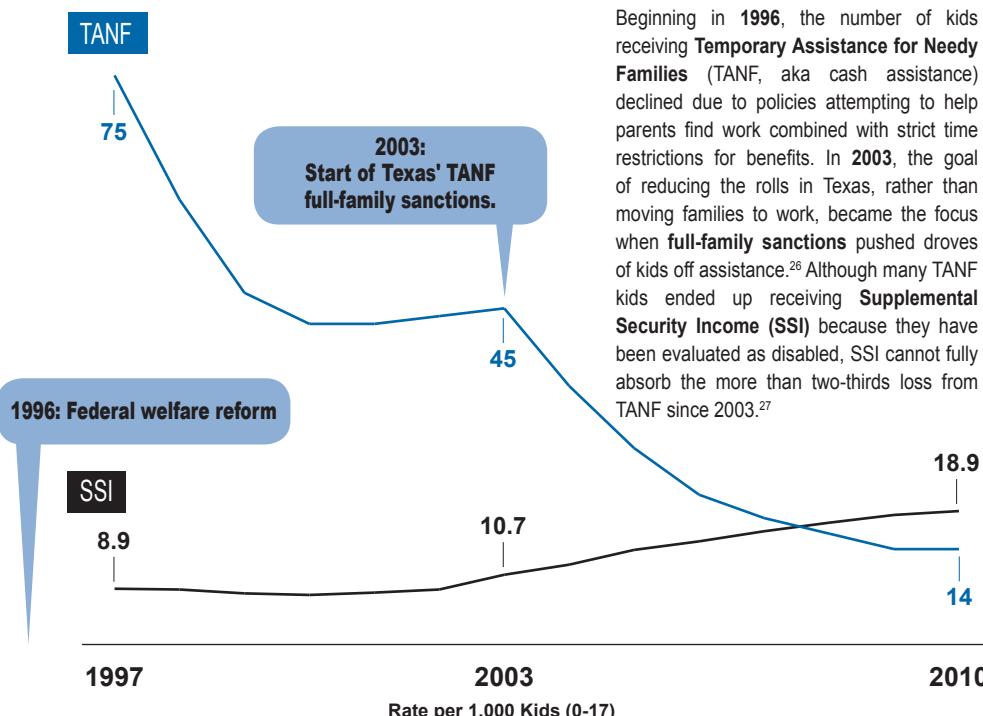
The **Official Poverty Measure** is based solely on income and doesn't take into account programs that help kids.

Though still considered experimental, the **Supplemental Poverty Measure**'s rate for children is lower because it shows the success of nutrition and housing assistance, the Earned Income Tax Credit, child care subsidies, and child health insurance programs in lifting children and families out of poverty.²⁴

22.5%
18.2%

SUPPLEMENTAL POVERTY MEASURE OFFICIAL POVERTY MEASURE

ALTHOUGH SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROVIDED SOME BUFFER, TEXAS' RECENT TANF POLICIES HARMFUL TO KIDS²⁵



Beginning in 1996, the number of kids receiving **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** (TANF, aka cash assistance) declined due to policies attempting to help parents find work combined with strict time restrictions for benefits. In 2003, the goal of reducing the rolls in Texas, rather than moving families to work, became the focus when **full-family sanctions** pushed droves of kids off assistance.²⁶ Although many TANF kids ended up receiving **Supplemental Security Income** (SSI) because they have been evaluated as disabled, SSI cannot fully absorb the more than two-thirds loss from TANF since 2003.²⁷



HEALTH CARE'S TUG

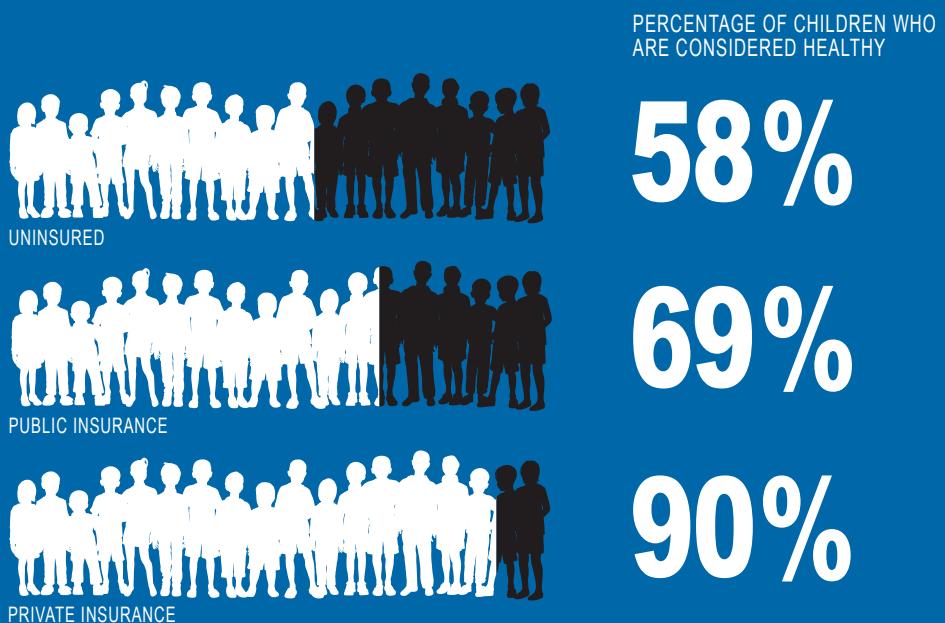
The health and well-being of our entire state is improved when all of our children have access to quality, affordable health care—yours, mine, and kids we've yet to meet. We all know that whether rich or poor, Black or White, every Texas child deserves to be healthy and have access to the care they need. Yet 1.2 million kids in this state lack the access to care they need to grow healthy and strong.

Over the past decade, a veritable policy tug-of-war has occurred between choices that expanded and improved access to health care and policies that reduced access. The good news is that the percentage of uninsured kids is significantly lower than it was just a few years ago. Texas provided additional resources for the eligibility system (e.g. more eligibility staff, better training, IT improvements) and reduced barriers to enrollment (e.g., allowing applications and renewal by mail) in our public health insurance programs.²⁸

Unfortunately, the 2011 Legislature made substantial cuts to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which threaten that progress. Facing a \$27 billion revenue shortfall, our legislators chose to reduce health and human services spending by \$10 billion for the next two years—pledging to restore \$5 billion of that funding in January 2013—rather than raising new revenues or using the state's rainy day fund. Even if the 2013 Legislature makes good on that pledge, the remaining cuts are projected to significantly affect access to care for low-income Texas children and affect the health of our whole community.²⁹

IT'S TIME TO DECIDE: WHAT WILL WE DO?

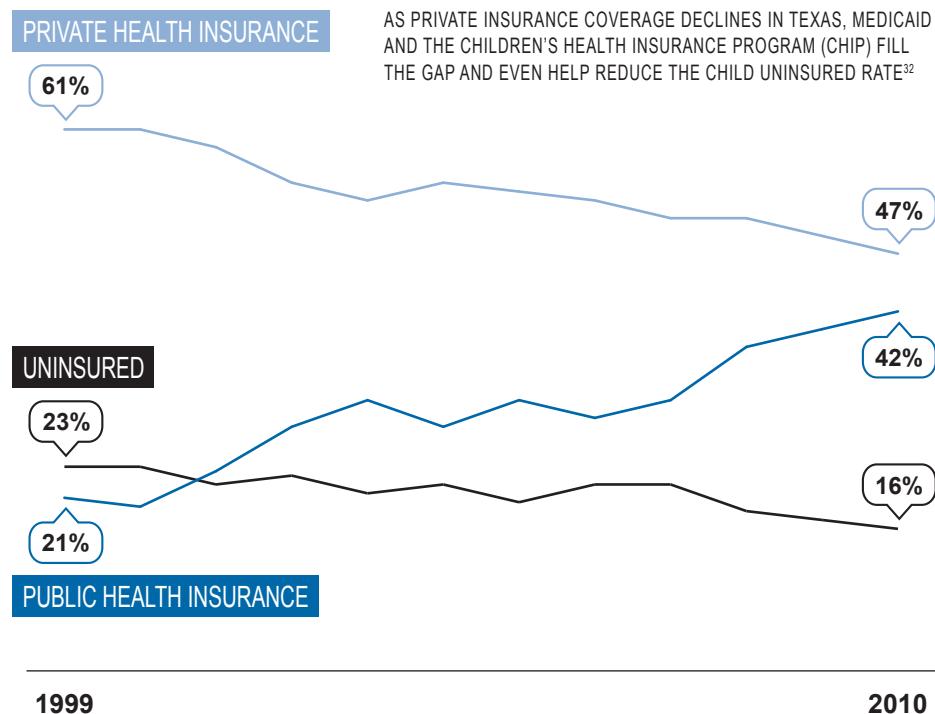
Will we undermine children's health by prioritizing short-term political gains over long-term solutions to our health care problems? Or will we choose to protect and promote the health of our entire state and help struggling families with modest incomes afford health care? If we build on our recent successes (e.g., reducing the uninsured rate and health reform's protections of kids' access to care),³⁰ we can continue to make real progress that matters to real people.



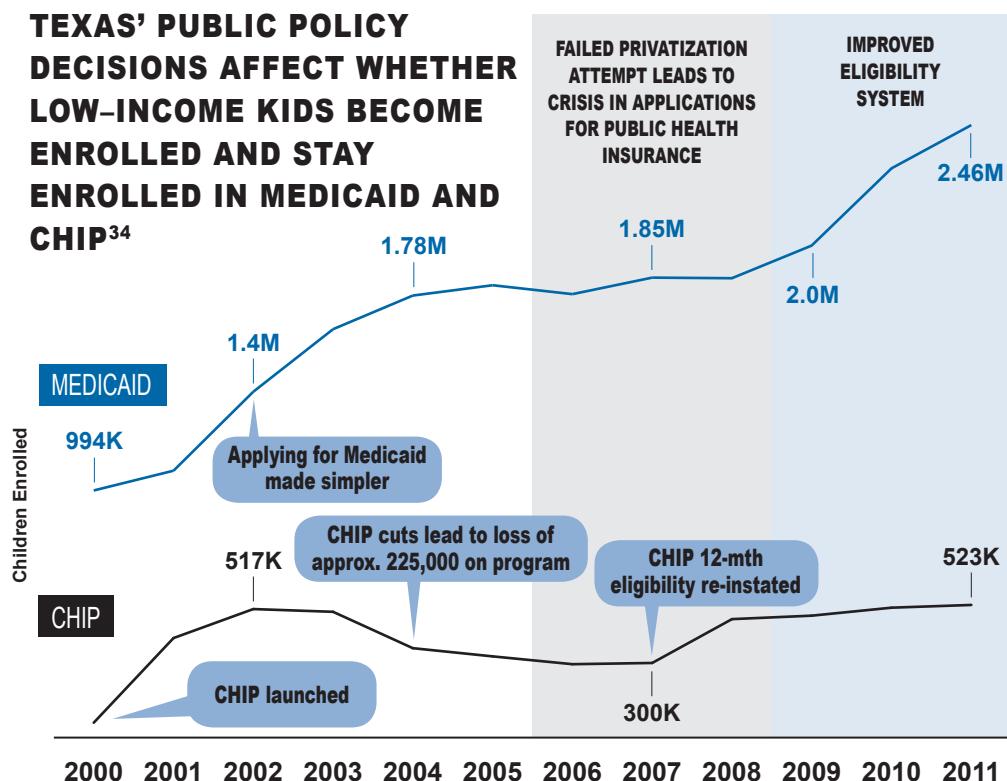
ACCESS TO COVERAGE A BIG FACTOR IN HOW HEALTHY OUR KIDS ARE³¹

OF WAR

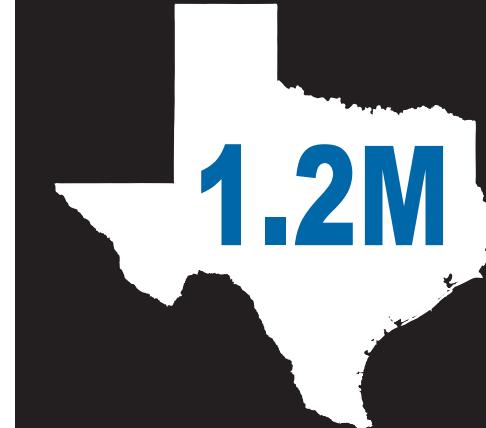
OUR POLICY CHOICES HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON KIDS' HEALTH



TEXAS' PUBLIC POLICY DECISIONS AFFECT WHETHER LOW-INCOME KIDS BECOME ENROLLED AND STAY ENROLLED IN MEDICAID AND CHIP³⁴



BETTER, BUT A LONG WAY TO GO



16.9% OF TEXAS KIDS UNINSURED IN 2009, DOWN FROM 20.8% IN 2006³³

MANY MIDDLE-INCOME FAMILIES CAN'T AFFORD HEALTH INSURANCE.



WITH THE NUMBER OF UNINSURED MIDDLE-INCOME KIDS UP BY 9%, KEEPING HEALTH REFORM INTACT WILL BE CRITICAL TO PROVIDING ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE FOR THOSE FAMILIES.³⁵

NUTRITION: TEXAS HUNGRY FOR

FOOD PROGRAMS KEEP KIDS FED AND HELP TEXAS FAMILIES BRIDGE THE GAPS DURING THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

43.6%

OF KIDS AGES 0-4 WERE ENROLLED IN THE WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM IN 2010⁴⁰

3M

SCHOOL-AGE KIDS WERE APPROVED FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCH (FRPL) IN 2010 (62%)⁴¹

1,809,902

KIDS AGES 0-17 WERE ENROLLED IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP, FORMERLY FOOD STAMPS) IN 2010⁴²

POOR KIDS MORE LIKELY TO BE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE⁴³

IN POVERTY

53%

LOW-INCOME

38%

MIDDLE-INCOME

29%

HIGH INCOME

17%

Texas kids suffer from two seemingly inconsistent nutrition problems: hunger and obesity. But in fact, these problems are two sides of the same coin. Families in poverty often rely on cheap, high-calorie foods because they cannot afford healthier alternatives. Child hunger and obesity are worse in Texas than most other states, with more than half of our kids in poverty considered overweight or obese (5th worst state)³⁶ and more than one in four living in households that were uncertain of having enough food or how they would pay for it (tied for worst state rate).³⁷

The federal nutrition safety net protects kids from going hungry and promotes healthy food choices by providing money to states for anti-hunger programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), WIC, and the School Breakfast/School Lunch program. These programs often provide the only nutritious food some children receive each day.

State-level policy choices determine the reach and benefits of our food assistance programs. Kids' nutrition benefitted from several positive choices during 2011, such as expanded access to school breakfast and summer food programs, and easier SNAP enrollment. These gains were tempered by extensive school funding cuts, including eliminating middle school P.E. grants and reducing funding for Fitnessgram, which provides data to schools to help them assess overall student fitness.³⁸ And nutrition programs face continued risks at the state and federal levels, such as possible across-the-board funding cuts and increased eligibility restrictions.³⁹ Eliminating child hunger and obesity is a choice. Let's choose a Texas that is fit, healthy, and ready to lead.

FOOD POLICY PROGRESS



1995 & 1997

LOW-INCOME SCHOOL DISTRICTS REQUIRED TO OFFER BREAKFAST & SUMMER FOOD PROGRAMS



1997

WIC CLINIC HOURS EXTENDED TO REACH MORE WOMEN

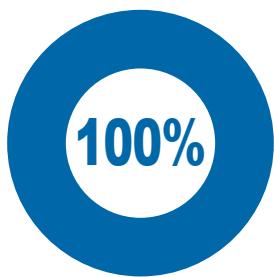


1999

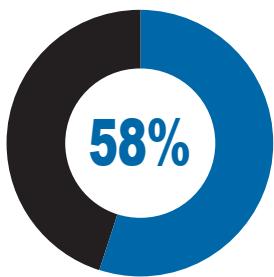
STATE APPROPRIATED FUNDS FOR SNAP OUTREACH AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

KIDS CHANGE

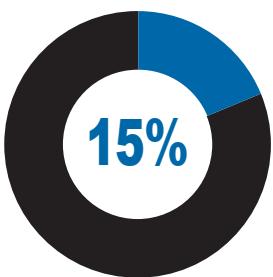
DESPITE OPPORTUNITY, LOW PARTICIPATION^{44, 45}



TEXAS HAD HIGHEST
PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS
OFFERING A SCHOOL
BREAKFAST PROGRAM



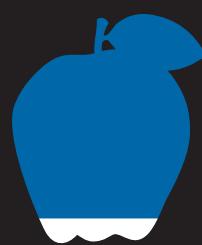
BUT LESS THAN 2/3
OF ELIGIBLE KIDS
PARTICIPATED IN THE
SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM,



AND ONLY 1 IN 6
ELIGIBLE KIDS
PARTICIPATED IN THE
SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM.

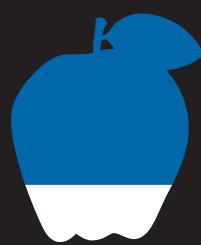
PERCENTAGE OF TEXAS KIDS ENROLLED IN SNAP INCREASED⁴⁶

2000



9.2%

2010



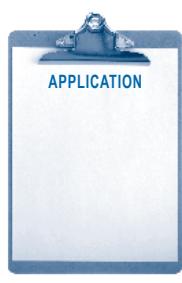
26.4%

NO CHILD SHOULD EXPERIENCE HUNGER, AND YET . . .



1 IN 4

TEXAS CHILDREN LIVE IN HOMES WHERE PARENTS
DO NOT KNOW WHERE THEIR NEXT MEAL WILL
COME FROM OR HOW THEY WILL AFFORD IT⁴⁷



2001

SNAP REQUIREMENTS ARE
SIMPLIFIED & FUNDING
APPROPRIATED TO SUPPORT
FRESH PRODUCE PROGRAMS AT
FOOD BANKS

2005

EXPANDED FREE LUNCH
PROGRAM AUTO-ENROLLMENT
FOR KIDS ON SNAP

2007-2009

FUNDING INCREASED FOR
SNAP ENROLLMENT STAFF IN
RESPONSE TO ELIGIBILITY
SYSTEM CRISIS

2011

FINGER IMAGING FOR SNAP
ELIMINATED; MORE SCHOOL
DISTRICTS REQUIRED TO
SPONSOR SUMMER FOOD
PROGRAM; CUT FUNDING
FOR P.E. AND FITNESSGRAM
PROGRAMS

FUTURE

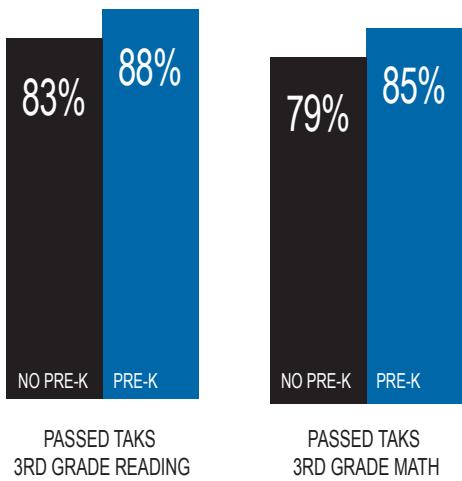
LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS MUST
ATTACK THE ROOT CAUSES
OF POVERTY AND CONTINUE
STRENGTHENING NUTRITION
SAFETY NET

EDUCATION: BIG

We can all agree that for Texas to succeed, our kids need a quality education that prepares them for the 21st century. Every child deserves the chance to become a doctor, artist, astronaut, or achieve any other dream. Texas public schools nurtured the dreams of over 4.9 million kids during 2010-11, an increase of nearly 86,000 kids from 2009-10.⁴⁸ That's like adding a brand new district the size of Fort Worth ISD in one year. Of those 4.9 million students, 59 percent (2.9 million) are considered economically disadvantaged (up from 52 percent in 2001-02).⁴⁹ Because family income is related to academic success, the increase in low-income Texas students means that providing quality education becomes more difficult and more important.

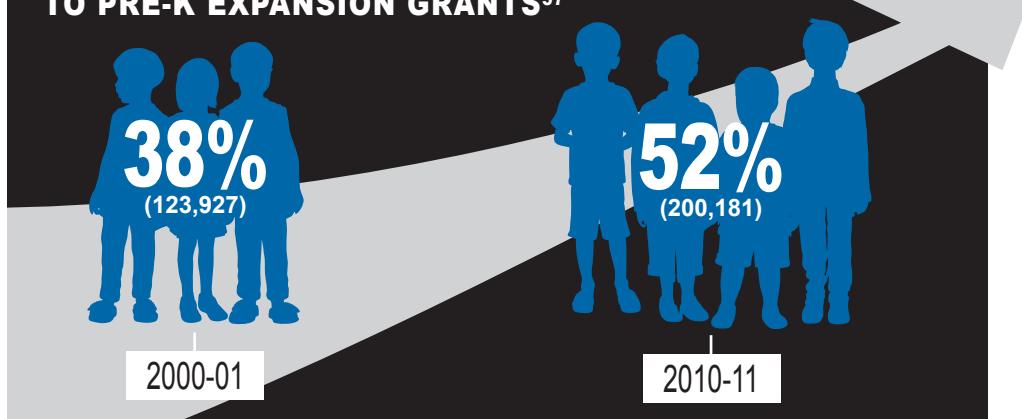
Pre-kindergarten is designed to prepare kids for kindergarten and is targeted to, among others, economically disadvantaged kids.⁵⁰ But the effects of pre-k last beyond kindergarten. Economically disadvantaged third graders who had participated in pre-k were more likely to pass their TAKS tests than those who did not.⁵¹ And

THE PRE-K ADVANTAGE

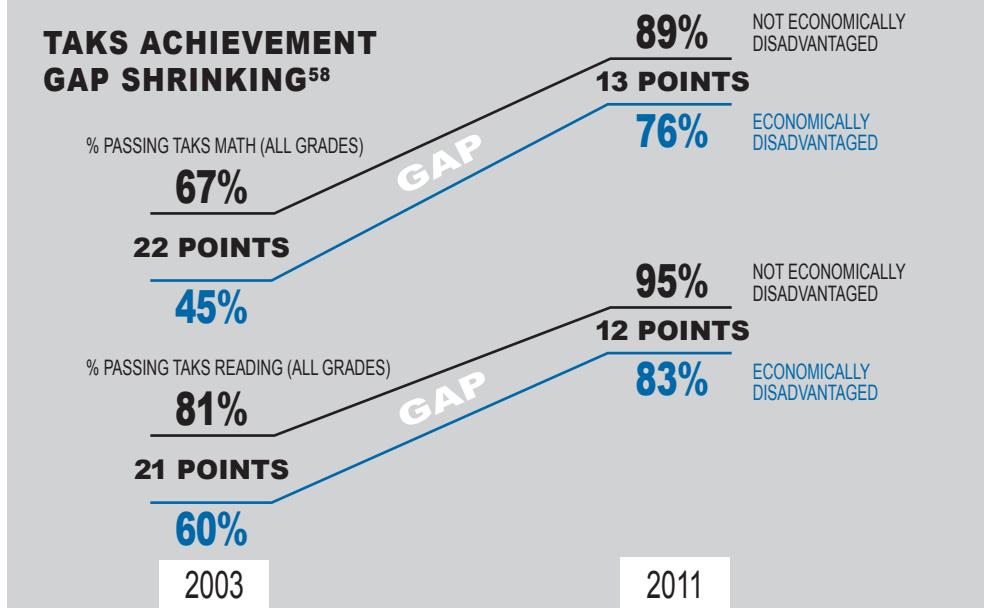


ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED KIDS WHO WENT TO PRE-K WERE MORE LIKELY TO PASS THEIR 3RD GRADE TAKS TESTS⁵⁶

INCREASE IN 4-YR-OLDS IN PRE-K DUE, IN PART, TO PRE-K EXPANSION GRANTS⁵⁷



TAKS ACHIEVEMENT GAP SHRINKING⁵⁸



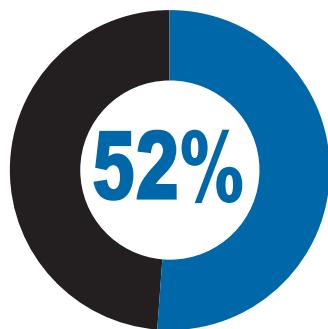
WINS & LOSSES

across grades, the gap between economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged students is shrinking.⁵² Because passing the TAKS affects grade promotion and graduation, the stakes are especially high. Simply receiving a high school degree decreases your chance of living in poverty by half.⁵³

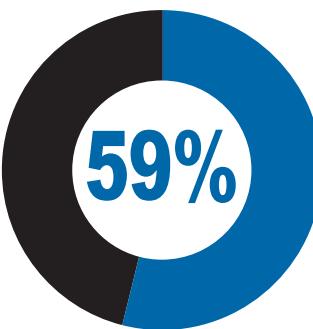
When more investment was needed to meet the educational needs of Texas' growing and diversifying population, legislators chose to cut \$4 billion in basic school funding and \$1.3 billion in education grants, including full-day pre-kindergarten and dropout prevention grants.⁵⁴ In response to these cuts, Texas schools are employing an estimated 32,000 fewer employees⁵⁵—and more layoffs and program cuts are expected when the 2013 fiscal year cuts go into effect.

Our future success depends on the investment we make in educating our kids now. For Texas to stay a great place to do business, we have to make smart choices about educating our future workforce. We must fully fund public education, prepare for growth, and build on the success of programs that help kids succeed. That is the only viable long-term plan for success.

MORE THAN EVER, TEXAS SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS NEED SUPPORT AS NEED CONTINUES TO GROW



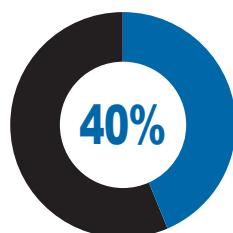
2001-02



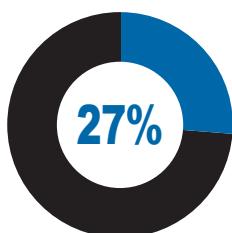
2010-11

THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS CLASSIFIED AS ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED INCREASED⁵²

CUTS TO DROPOUT PREVENTION MAY ENDANGER A POSITIVE TREND



CLASS OF 2001



CLASS OF 2011

THE PERCENTAGE OF TEXAS 9TH GRADERS WHO LEAVE BEFORE GRADUATION HAS DECLINED THANKS TO JOINT COMMUNITY, PRIVATE SECTOR, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITMENTS TO DROPOUT PREVENTION.⁵⁹ ALTHOUGH A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT, WE ARE STILL LOSING 1 IN 4 TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BEFORE THEY GRADUATE.⁶⁰

TEXAS DROPOUTS MAKE ONLY 36 CENTS FOR EVERY DOLLAR EARNED BY COLLEGE GRADUATES⁶¹



VS.



TEXAS' EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT

PER-PUPIL SPENDING—BEFORE THE CUTS⁶³

46th

THE 2011 LEGISLATURE UNDERFUNDED PUBLIC EDUCATION BY

5.3 BILLION
FOR THE 2012-13 BIENNIAL⁶⁴

INCLUDING THE ELIMINATION OF



CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

STATE BUDGET & CHILD WELFARE: PENNY WISE AND POUND FOOLISH

Home should be a place where every child feels safe. Our policy decisions in recent years reflected a renewed commitment to protecting abused and neglected children and helping support a safe home environment. Policymakers made significant reforms and provided additional money to the Texas Child Protective Services (CPS) agency during the 2005, 2007, and 2009 legislative sessions.⁶⁵ These reforms lost momentum during the 2011 legislative session when policymakers chose to slash funding for essential services instead of using our Rainy Day Fund savings or raising revenue to help overcome the \$27 billion deficit.⁶⁶

65,948

FAR TOO MANY CONFIRMED VICTIMS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT⁶⁹

WHEN KIDS ARE REMOVED
FROM THEIR HOMES, A SMALLER
PERCENTAGE WERE PLACED IN
FOSTER CARE

2000

84%

DOWN TO

69%

2011

THANKS TO INCREASED
FOCUS ON PLACING KIDS WITH
RELATIVES⁷¹

FIFTY PERCENT OF CONFIRMED VICTIMS
RECEIVE CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES.
OF THOSE, APPROXIMATELY

70%

ARE PROVIDED
FAMILY-BASED SERVICES
IN THEIR HOMES.⁷⁰



EVEN WITH MORE KIDS PLACED WITH RELATIVES,

30,347

CHILDREN LIVED IN FOSTER CARE

AT SOME POINT DURING 2011⁷²

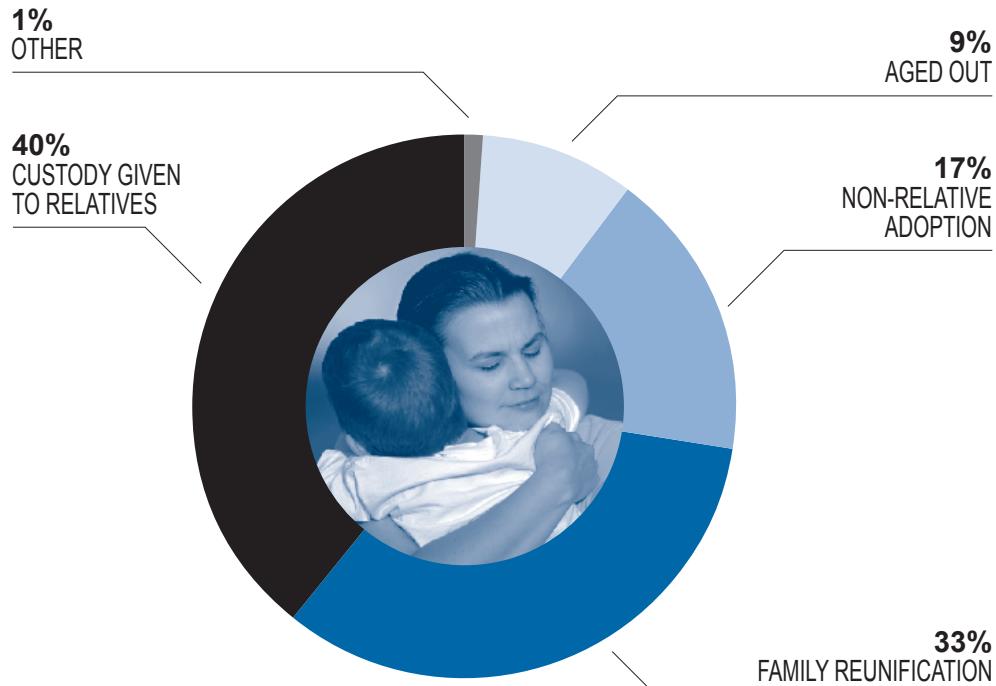
The Legislature did not fund expected caseload growth for family services and cut funding for statewide intake staff, adoption services, and child abuse and neglect prevention programs.⁶⁷ CPS will continue to implement its scheduled reforms to the foster care system, but will be challenged to provide necessary and mandated services within a more limited budget.⁶⁸

In an ideal world, we would not need child protective services. Unfortunately, when children and families fall through society's cracks, CPS is the service of last resort—shielding children from further harm. Without significant additional state investments, CPS will be forced to selectively spend their ever-dwindling resources on mandated expenses (i.e., foster care), even if keeping a child safe at home is better for the child and cheaper for the state. With another deficit looming for the 2014-15 budget, Texas can't afford to be penny wise and pound foolish.

BECAUSE WE UNDERFUNDED IN-HOME SERVICES TO SAVE MONEY, WE MAY SEE A SHIFT BACK TO PUTTING KIDS IN FOSTER CARE IN 2012-2013— WHICH, IRONICALLY, COSTS MUCH MORE MONEY



LEAVING STATE CUSTODY⁷⁵

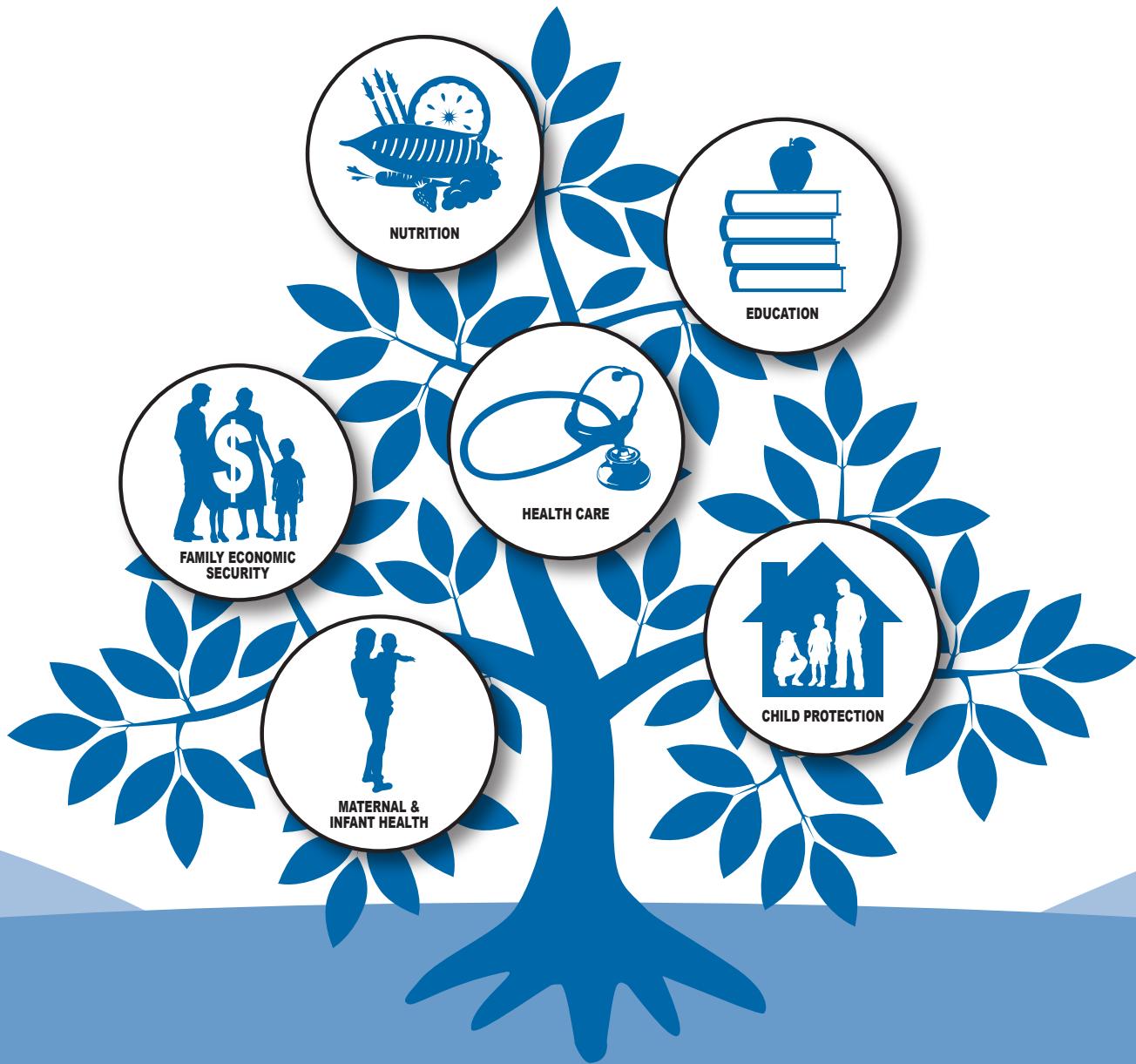


MORE THAN 16,000 CHILDREN EXITED STATE CUSTODY⁷⁴ IN 2011

90% HAD LEGALLY PERMANENT PLACEMENTS. LEGALLY PERMANENT PLACEMENTS INCLUDE REUNIFICATION WITH FAMILY, CUSTODY GIVEN TO A RELATIVE⁷⁶, OR NON-RELATIVE ADOPTION.

WHEN CHILDREN LEAVE STATE CUSTODY, THE PREFERRED OPTION IS TO SAFELY RETURN THE CHILD HOME. THE NEXT BEST ALTERNATIVE IS TO FIND ANOTHER FAMILY WHO WILL TAKE CUSTODY AND PROVIDE A PERMANENT HOME, WITH PREFERENCE GIVEN TO A CHILD'S RELATIVES.⁷⁷ CPS TRIES TO AVOID CHILDREN EXITING BY AGING OUT WHEN THEY TURN 18 OR AN "OTHER" TYPE OF EXIT⁷⁸ BECAUSE IN MOST CASES, THESE CHILDREN EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTIES TRANSITIONING TO LIVING ON THEIR OWN.

CHOICES FOR OUR FUTURE: PLANT THE SEED AND LET IT GROW



Every child should have the chance to fulfill his or her full potential. That means seeing a doctor when they need one, having access to nutritious food, feeling safe at home, and obtaining a high quality education. But positive or negative outcomes for kids don't just happen. They are the inevitable results of effective or failed policy choices.

Our policy choices reflect our priorities and what we choose to invest in for the future. But you cannot expect returns on investments you do not make. After devastating cuts last legislative session, our future returns may be quite small.

Who keeps kids healthy? Who keeps kids safe? Who helps educate our kids? We do . . . With our voice. Talk to your families, friends, neighbors, and leaders about how our choices matter. Because Texas KIDS COUNT.

ENDNOTES

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- 5: See note 2.
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- 23: 2010 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.
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- 25: SSI data from the Social Security Administration. TANF data from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.
- 26: To learn more, see Cole, C. (2007). *CPPP comments on the TANF state plan*. Center for Public Policy Priorities. <http://bit.ly/AnsipP>.
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- 28: See note 12.
- 29: See note 12.
- 30: See note 12.
- 31: 2007 National Survey of Children's Health.
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- 73: 2011 Average annual per child spending (total spent on foster care/total kids in foster care). Note: not all kids receive services for a full year. Services for an entire year would be significantly higher. CPPP analysis of data from 2012 CPS operating budget, Department of Family and Protective Services.
- 74: State custody includes kids in substitute care plus kids previously in substitute care now in trial home-visits.
- 75: CPPP analysis of data from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
- 76: Custody given to a relative includes Relative Permanent Managing Conservatorship and Relative Adoption.
- 77: Relatives take custody either as a permanent managing conservator or an adoptive parent. Non-relatives take custody as an adoptive parent.
- 78: Other exits include running away, transferring to another agency (e.g., Juvenile Justice), or passing away.



We believe in Texas • We believe in the people of Texas—our friends and neighbors, our sons and daughters • ALL Texans • We stand for community • People from all walks of life • United • We stand for justice • Working to improve public policy • Advocating at the Capitol and on the Hill • We stand for telling the truth—respectfully but with courage • And we mean the whole truth based on hard facts and rigorous analysis • When 1 in 5 of us lives in poverty • 1 in 4 doesn't have health care • And 1 in 5 children in this state is at risk of going hungry...Things have to change • And that's why we're here • Together we can make our state a better place for all of us • A place of opportunity and prosperity • Because we all do better when we all do better • We never shy away from the tough conversations • About affordable health care, strong schools and colleges, good jobs, and child well-being • We stand for economic and social opportunity for all Texans • Because Texans believe in opportunity • For over a quarter of a century, we've strived to do our best • Finding meaning in our work • Fighting for what's right • Because we believe in a better Texas •



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